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ABSTRACT

After an incident of student drinking, a committee was formed by parents, students, and school faculty to deal with the problem of alcohol abuse. Later a program was developed with the goals to inform parents, students, and faculty about the values of cohesive behavior and the means of working together as groups, about communicating clearly with each other, and about cooperating in the process of helping students to meet their full potential. Components of the program include a parent survey, parent meetings, a senior parent workshop on relating to senior students, retreats, student seminars, leadership classes, and a senior project. Information from the surveys is collated by grade level and used in planning the upcoming school year and parent meetings for each grade level. In the fall and the spring of the school year selected classes are taken to a retreat center. A review of the success of these retreats has highlighted the need for an ongoing opportunity for students to meet. The forum for these ongoing discussions is the class seminar. Plans to begin leadership classes for students are being formulated. Another component being formulated is the senior class project, which will bring closure to the years of cooperation. All components of the program are reviewed on a regular basis and are adjusted to meeting the changing needs of the faculty, students, and parents. (LLL)

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COHESION, COMMUNICATION, CO-OPERATION PROGRAM

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It was Homecoming 1986 at Berkeley Preparatory School, and students began arriving at the hotel ballroom a half-hour before the dance ended. They arrived at the dance under the influence of alcohol after attending private parties in nearby hotel rooms. Chaperones knew that approximately fifty to sixty students were in immediate and long-range danger that night, but the usual enforcement of school rules would accomplish only a portion of what was needed and would separate a large number of students from the school. Besides, it was more important to emphasize their safety now and to focus on illegal and unhealthy behavior later.

The decision was made to get students home safely and to deal with the situation in school on Monday. A meeting of the Dean, the Upper Division Director, and the Headmaster resulted in a decision to deal with the behavior as a counselling issue, not a disciplinary issue, and to enlist the assistance in doing this of one of the school's greatest strengths, its parents.

At that time it seemed that parents had abdicated much of their responsibility for the behavior of their children. With the school's help, this responsibility should now be put into perspective with the school and parents sharing in this responsibility as appropriate. At a well-attended meeting, Upper Division parents and faculty heard the facts of the incident and separated into smaller groups for the discussion of seventeen points regarding parent responsibility. (Attachment No. 1)

Groups then re-assembled to hear reports from each group. The discussion ran the gamut from blame to shame and finally began the long road to solution. The health and safety of Berkeley students and the accomplishment of this health and safety became the foremost issues.

An ad hoc committee of parents, students, and faculty called the Committee on Alcohol Abuse formed and met frequently to assess the problem and to recommend action. The following actions seemed appropriate and were reported to parents in April of 1987.

1. Support for school rules and the enforcement of them,
2. Support of faculty chaperones as they fulfilled their responsibilities,
3. Reestablishment of earlier guidelines for parents regarding teen-age parties. (Attachment No. 2),
4. Addition of two rules to the 1986-87 Student Handbook:
    a. If at any time while under school supervision, a student is suspected of using drugs or alcohol, the student will be detained, and the parent will be called to come for the student.
    b. Arrival and Departure times at dances:
        1. Latest arrival time - 30 minutes after scheduled start of dance.
        2. Earliest departure time - 30 minutes before scheduled end of dance.

5. Open letter from the Student Forum to the student body outlining the Student Forum's support of a solution. (Attachment No. 3),
6. Open letter from parents to their children expressing their concerns for this behavior (Attachment No. 4),
7. Convocations sponsored by the Student Forum featuring community experts on the legal implications and the medical effects of substance abuse, and
8. A letter from the heads of the fourteen (14) schools in the Bay Area Association of Independent Schools to parents outlining the concerns of these Schools for student behavior.

After the smoke had cleared from Homecoming 1986, it seemed that for this incident all appropriate measures had been taken, and for the Classes of 1987 and 1988 and possibly for the Classes of 1989 and 1990, as much information as possible had been disseminated to parents, students, and faculty. But what of other classes at Berkeley? What about those whose social involvement began after the Homecoming 1986 project was over? What about new students to the school? What about the element of human nature which causes the relaxation of standards and expectations as threat of a crisis fades?

It was from these concerns that the Cohesion, Communication, and Co-operation program came into being and with the approval of the Headmaster began to evolve into programs for parents, students, and faculty under the direction of the Upper Division staff at Berkeley Preparatory School. The staff members are the Director of the Upper Division, the Dean of Students, the Director of College Counselling and Academic Counselor for Grades Eleven and Twelve, the Academic Counselor for Grades Nine and Ten, and the Personal Counselor. The goals of this program are to inform parents, students, and faculty as much as possible about the values of cohesive behavior and the means of working together as groups, about communicating clearly with each other, and about co-operating in the process of helping Berkeley students to meet their full potential. Through the components of this program all three groups are empowered to deal with the problems of young people and their families.

Components include:

1. Parent survey (Begun Spring 1988) (Attachment No. 5)
2. Parent meetings (Begun Fall 1988)
3. Senior parent workshop on relating to Senior students (Begun Fall 1991).
4. Retreats
    a. Freshman retreats (Fall 1989, Fall 1990, Fall 1991)
    b. Senior retreats (Fall 1989, Spring 1991)

c. Junior retreats (Spring 1990, Spring 1991)

d. Prefect retreats (Fall 1990, Fall 1991)

5. Student Seminars

   a. Senior Seminars (Begun Fall 1991)

   b. Freshmen Seminars (Begun Fall 1991)

   c. Sophomore Seminars (in progress)

   d. Junior Seminars (in progress)

6. Leadership Classes (in progress)

7. Senior project (in progress)

Plans to phase in this Cohesion, Communication, Cooperation program began in the Spring of 1988 with the mailing of a survey sheet to each family, asking for commendations and recommendations regarding the previous school year. This confidential survey focusses on information that parents have found or would have found beneficial to them and to their children during the school year.

Information from the survey sheets is collated by grade level and is used in planning the upcoming school year, if possible. It is also used in planning the parent meetings for each grade level in September and October.

These meetings (begun in the Fall of 1988) contain information for parents that will help them in relating with their children during the school year. The following information is presented:

1. Introduction of people in Upper Division Administration who will work with parents and students during the year,
2. Developmental expectations for students as 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th graders,
3. Ways in which academic, emotional, physical, and social changes may be manifested in Berkeley students,
4. Academic expectations at Berkeley,
5. Support systems available at Berkeley, and
6. Information on events which are planned by the school.

An additional goal of each parent meeting is to have parents meet each other, learn that other parents face similar problems, gain reassurance about establishing and enforcing family standards of behavior, and begin to network in support of each other.

Senior parents have an additional component (added in the fall of 1991) to their fall meeting - that of learning to let go of their children during the Senior year in preparation for the college experience. The plan is to include this component in future years and to continue to supplement the meeting with guest speakers. The program in October of 1991 featured the author of a well-known book written for parents regarding the college experience. The author is involved with students at the college level.[1] A follow-up to this fall meeting is scheduled for the spring if parents feel such a meeting will be helpful.

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In working with high school students, the faculty and staff began to realize that little thought had been given to guiding students in working together positively or in assuming leadership roles. Plans to provide this instruction began in the fall of 1989 with the establishment of student retreats. The details of this component of the Cohesion, Communication, Cooperation Program have evolved as follows.

In the fall and the spring of the school year selected classes (Freshmen and Juniors) are taken by bus at the end of the school day to a Retreat Center north of Tampa where students stay overnight in cabins with faculty chaperones and eat in a dining hall. The cost of the retreats is borne by the students who attend. On May 14, 1990, Berkeley received word that the Interactive Workshops for Freshmen and Seniors had been approved by the Margaret Hall Foundation for a grant award during the 1990-91 school year. The school continues to seek additional funding for this project.

During free time students enjoy swimming, canoeing, tennis, gameroom activities, miniature golf, campfire, hayrides, and movies. The amount of free time each group has is determined by the diligence with which the group approaches the stated goals of the retreat and the workshops which facilitate the attainment of these goals.

The purposes of the retreats and the workshops scheduled vary with the needs of the age group. For example, one-third of the class enters Berkeley for the first time as Freshmen. On this fall retreat these students are introduced to their classmates and begin to form friendships. They learn about working in groups with each other to accomplish stated objectives. Workshops are conducted by professional workshop lecturers who specialize in programs for student leadership. Workshops include identification of personal leadership styles through the Youth Development Profile by Performax, completion of a Communication Inventory, involvement in brainstorming exercises, practice in group problem solving, expression of school concerns and means to address those concerns, identification of leadership qualities, and participation in group practice sessions.[2] In addition, students receive guidelines for planning the high school years and for looking ahead to the college years.

After a period of campaigning and speeches, Freshmen elect class officers, Student Forum representatives, and a Serious Discipline Committee representative at the end of the retreat. These officers begin to lead the class immediately, as they plan to incorporate the skills learned during the retreat into school life upon their return to campus.

Juniors go on a retreat in the spring to reinforce bonds with their classmates and to prepare themselves for the leadership role they each will play as a member of the Senior class. Their

workshops include the same types of activities as in the Freshmen workshop, but the main emphasis for Juniors is on active leadership, leadership by example, and management by objective. Class members are also encouraged to learn more about a classmate they do not know and to continue this relationship into the Senior year.

The Senior Retreat is scheduled in the Spring as a final opportunity for the class to be together as a group. Class officers are responsible for organizing the retreat and for promoting attendance among the members of the class. The workshop information which is disseminated here includes a discussion of separation from family and childhood, date and acquaintance rape, AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases, pros and cons of fraternities and sororities, college major and minor selection, use of free time in college, responsibilities for themselves and their needs, dealing with roommates and personality conflicts, and the need to seek counselling on campus. This program was developed by the Upper Division Dean of Students.[3]

Activities include time to reflect on who and what the students are as Seniors at Berkeley and how they have reached this point in their lives. It is a bittersweet time, filled with messages of caring and support for each other. In the event that a retreat is not possible for Seniors in a given year, the class has

a meeting in the spring to refresh their knowledge of the topics named above and any other topics they may raise.

The retreat for the Prefects is scheduled in the fall and features leadership training for the Seniors who have been selected by the faculty to serve as Prefects in the Senior Leadership group at Berkeley. In workshops they begin to understand the qualities of leadership and to learn to work effectively in and with a group, to include all members of the group, to follow directions, to work together to solve problems, and to provide fair leadership. The Prefect program was developed by the Chairman of the Department of Fine Arts.[4]

A review of the success of these retreats has highlighted the need for an ongoing opportunity for students to meet together during the year to discuss issues pertinent to each age group in the Upper Division as these issues arise. The forum for these ongoing discussions is the class seminar which is being phased in for all Upper Division students at Berkeley Preparatory School.

Seniors began the 1991-92 school year with schedules which placed them in a Seminar with the Personal Counselor for one meeting per week for one marking period (6-8 weeks). Discussion topics in clude: self-image, self-worth, self-protection, social behaviors and pressures, college life, college parties, eating disorders, peer pressure, family situations, friends and relationships, aca-

demic pressures, AIDS reinforcement, dealing with success and failure, dealing adversity, sex, freedom and responsibility, commitment, and explanation of the larger view of education.

As the year has progressed, Seminars have been added for Freshmen students. Since all of these students are new to the Upper Division, they will meet one period a week all year to facilitate their adjustment to high school. Freshman seminars are conducted by the Dean of Students, the Academic Counselor for Grades Nine and Ten, and other speakers as appropriate. Topics for discussion with this age group include: proper manners and courteous behavior, self esteem, study skills, Honor Code, grades, stress, AIDS, optimum health, teen suicide, pressure from self, parents, school, and peers, substance abuse, teacher/student relations, and any other topics which are deemed timely and appropriate.

As the Cohesion, Communication, and Co-operation program evolves, the need for supplementary components is recognized. Plans to begin leadership classes for students are being formulated and will begin in the fall of 1992. These plans will include initial workshops open to all students and continuing classes for those students who seek benefits from leadership training. The positive effects of this component of the program will be felt both during the years at Berkeley and afterward.

Another component which will begin next year with the Class of 1993 is the Senior Class project which will be determined by

class members, planned during the school year, and completed during the weeks before graduation. Such a project will bring closure to the years of co-operation as a class at Berkeley, co-operation which began in the fall of the Freshman year and has continued through the years to completion of the Senior year. The purpose of this closure is for the Senior class as Berkeley students; such closure opens the way for new beginnings of cohesion, communication, and co-operation for the class as Berkeley alumni.

All components of the program are reviewed on a regular basis and are adjusted to meeting the changing needs of the faculty, students, and parents at Berkeley Preparatory School. All is positive for the program as it enters its third year of existence.

The Cohesion, Communication, Co-operation Program has approached a serious school problem which had potentially negative results with positive efforts and empowered all those involved - faculty, parents, and students - to change the learning environment through this program. Now at Berkeley there is responsibility for behavior; there is accountability for actions; there is trust that understanding of young people exists; there is confidence that young people will behave appropriately if that is the expectation; and there is improved self-image and self-esteem for these young people as high school students. There is also strong support for providing for the health and safety of Berkeley students.

Although every year is different in its level of challenges and successes, and each group of students lends a different personality to the Upper Division of Berkeley Preparatory School, there is now a conducive environment for cohesion, communication, and co-operation among faculty, students, and parents. All groups can be very proud that they have the opportunity to accomplish these goals themselves.

Endnotes

1. Speaker in October of 1991 was Karen Levin Coburn, co-author of the book Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Today's College Experience (1988) and Associate Dean for Student Development at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

2. Leader of the Freshman workshops (1989, 1990, 1991), the Senior workshop (1989), and the Junior workshops (1990, 1991) was Douglas Jennings, Headmaster of the Indian Springs School in Helena, Alabama.

3. Upper Division Dean of Students at Berkeley Preparatory School is Thomas R. Stephenson.

4. Chairman of the Fine Arts Department at Berkeley Preparatory School is Michael Locklair.

Discussion Topics - Parent and Faculty Meeting:

1. What expectations do parents have of the school in terms of monitoring students' social behavior?
2. What could/should parents do to control/monitor normal weekend parties?
3. Do you permit your child to drink at home? Why? Why not?
4. Do you permit your sons/daughters to attend parties where alcohol is served?
5. Do you permit your sons/daughters to attend parties whether or not there are adult chaperones?
6. Do you allow your child to attend parties in hotel rooms?
7. Do you support a curfew for your children?
8. Are there differences between the expectations we have for the ninth and tenth graders and for the eleventh and twelfth graders with respect to social monitoring?
9. Do you know what constitutes child abuse?
10. What should be the school's role in providing social activities?
11. Who should chaperone these events?
12. Where should they be held?
13. What is the expectation and liability of chaperones (faculty or parent) at these events?
14. Do you understand the scope of Berkeley's rules?
15. Should Berkeley be concerned about behavior that is not related to school events? (See Student Handbook, 1986-87 "Avoidance of behavior unbecoming to a Berkeley student whether at an official function or not.")
16. What should our attitude be toward parents who allow, condone, or encourage use of alcohol and/or drugs?
17. Does this kind of parental evening serve a purpose?

These guidelines are a direct result of a meeting and discussion between students (9, 10, 11, and 12 grades), parents, administration and Board members of Berkeley Preparator School.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

1. Provide good communication opportunities and a strong sense of a family unit.
2. Provide guidelines for your child, let him/her know what is expected of him/her.
3. Be consistent; do not give a "free rein."
4. Set good examples for your children regarding drinking and drugs.
5. Provide your child with an "out" when he/she does not want to go along with others.
6. Know where your child is going, with whom he/she is going and when he/she is going to be home.
7. Be up or awake when your child comes home; it shows you care.
8. Check with the family giving a party. Ask questions like how many adult chaperones will be there, what time the party starts and stops, and what will be served.
9. Send any child home if he/she is bringing alcohol or drugs into your home.
10. Discourage substance abuse.
11. Make your child aware of your attitudes on substance abuse; communicate that you care at his/her body.
12. Form discussion groups or attend seminars on parenting and communicating; be aware of pressures on and concerns of teenagers today.

SUGGESTIONS FROM STUDENTS:

1. Provide more victory parties and school-organized dances with faculty and parents as chaperones.
2. Pick themes for social occasions, such as Sadie Hawkin's dance, Valentine's dance, etc.
3. Ask those students whose behavior is questionable to be in on the planning of school parties. Draw them into positive social interaction with others.
4. Educate students as to what drugs are and how they affect their bodies.
5. Educate students as to what to do if someone passes out or is heavily on drugs or alcohol. Teach first-aid and how to get help.
6. Provide activities for students, make your home open and available, and make your child friends <u>feel</u> welcome.
7. Know your child's friends and where his/her friends live.
8. Parent groups set policies for social functions--do not allow substance abuse--communica that to other parents.
9. Educate parents as to warning signs of abusive behavior.
10. Have a student teaching day, a time where students teach each other about substance abuse.

GUIDELINES

Submitted by the student members of the Guidelines Committee - Spring, 1987

Communication is a valuable tool. Through our committee meetings, we students have had the opportunity to talk with parents and administrators about our views on drinking and the school. It was decided that although there can be no exact boundaries, there is a unit that can be called the "Berkeley Family," and the Berkeley administration has some jurisdiction in the case of disciplinary matters outside of the school.

In our meetings we also discussed how a problem like the one which gave rise to this committee could be remedied or prevented. The first way was to reorganize the chaperone system, assuring the chaperones that the school would back their decisions. The second way was to control drinking among students.

The students on the committee do not think it would be effective for us to stand up in front of the student body and just say "Don't Drink" even though abstaining may be the safest way for a student to handle drinking. Dr. Brown said that we (as high school students) are all at an experimental stage in our lives. In response to this idea, part of the parent group said that we should "teach our kids to drink responsibly." Most students at Berkeley are smart. Neither the student government nor this committee can condone drinking. But, if you have to drink, we can say "DO IT RESPONSIBLY." Do not drink and drive; do not get in a car with a driver who has been drinking, and if you see that someone is having a problem, try to get him help. Commonsense practices like these will help keep you alive longer and will help ease your parents' worries."

As the student part of the committee, we have made the following specific recommendations and observations for review by all groups involved:

1. We agree with and support the on campus rules concerning alcohol and/or drugs.
2. We recommend that the parents of students discovered under the influence of these substances should be called immediately.
3. We believe that students' activities outside of school are their personal business, but should be pursued with the consideration of the consequences of such action.
4. We recommend the reinstitution of 9th Grade (and possibly other grades as well) seminars and the continuation of the Mendez foundation programs.
5. We encourage increased communication between parents and children.
6. We urge parents to open their homes to their children and friends and sponsor alcohol-free parties.
7. Don't be out to get your kids; malicious gossip between parents and faculty encourages rebellion.

April, 1987

Enclosure 2

BERKELEY PREPARATORY SCHOOL

April 6, 1987

Dear Son and Daughter:

It's a little unusual to address a letter to you while you are still at home, but this letter will help us say some things we want you to ponder before you respond. We really do want to talk with you. In fact, we fear there isn't enough talk between us. But you know how some of our perfectly calm conversations have turned into heated arguments because we stopped listening and started preaching and you started yelling and acting obstinate. We hope this letter will serve to make some space, or create a time-out period for you to think about what we are saying and what you want to say in response.

First of all, and above all else, we love you.

There is a great temptation to stop and say no more. Yet, along with our love we have other concerns: We have fears, some genuine worries, and a little middle-age anxiety. Don't dismiss our "middle-age craziness" too quickly. We've survived adolescence and you will too. But your teen years are harder than our teen years were. You're more mature at your age than we were at ours. We realize that you are coping with a much faster life, more social pressure, and heavier academic demands while feeling stronger competition not only for your time but also for your loyalties. Because we see how tough it can be, because we see how hard you try, because we want you not only to succeed but to excel, we need to tell you not only of our love but also our concerns.

As you know, the problems which surfaced at the Homecoming Dance resulted in a group meeting of parents at school. About two hundred parents attended. Out of that large meeting a council composed of parents, students, teachers and administrators was formed. We have discussed at length what the problems seem to be and, more importantly, what the solutions are.

This letter is the parents' response. It is addressed to you, our sons and daughters. But it is also intended to make clear to the board, faculty and administration what we expect as parents.

We, your parents, are vested with the responsibility of teaching you a set of values. It comes with parenthood. The values we hold are not really that unique. They are represented in the code of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Be specific you say? All right, read the Ten Commandments. These ten statements of God's law are also mandates of the natural law which guides the conduct of all people. We really don't think we can improve on this moral code. We have decided not to create or revise a new set of rules since that diverts us from the heart of the message we want you to hear. Our feeling is that you know the rules. Our concern is your attitude.

We are deeply concerned when you and your friends tell us you can't have a good time or a party without alcohol. Realistically, we are not afraid of the normal experimentation that is part of adolescence. We know a beer isn't going to hurt you. But who is fooling who? That's not the problem. The problem is the excessive drinking, and those of you who are already caught in the escapist behavior of the drunkard. Besides the very real danger of killing yourself or someone else with the car, there is the added danger that you have unknowingly accepted drinking as a way to solve problems or make them go away. If you really feel that way - that you can't cope or have a good time without

April 6, 1987
Continued

alcohol - please, we beg you, tell us. You won't break our hearts. You, in fact, will convince us of your maturity and ability to face the real problems of life and win.

Part of the reality of maturing is realizing that a society larger than your home and immediate family must now be taken into consideration. When you were small, we could take care of almost everything at home. Now that you are an adolescent and spending more time away from home, we must remind you that there is a civil law and it does prohibit you from drinking at your age. It also prohibits you from taking drugs, driving under the influence, speeding and a long list of other things. We can't make these things go away. We don't want to make them go away. We want you to wise up, get smart, study life. This "it can't happen to me" attitude kills someone every day. Yes, we pledge to defend and protect you to the best of our ability. Understand, your behavior may place you in situations we cannot change.

Of course, Berkeley can't allow you to drink at school functions. It would be insane for any school to defy the civil law, common sense and the expressed wishes of the parents. We have sent you to Berkeley because we feel the school will help nurture the values we are teaching. If Berkeley is, as you suggest, inconsistent or partial in it's treatment of student offenders, don't stand for it. Tell us the problem. We have selected private education not because we oppose public education, but because we want something more, something better for you. We don't want Berkeley to influence only your test scores and the college of your choice. We want Berkeley to make a difference in your life. We hope we are investing in your future by sending you to a school with a commitment to values. Yes, we want you to get smarter. We also want you to get wiser. We hope you and your teachers will spend some time exploring the difference between these two concepts.

And yes, while we are on the subject of Berkeley, we do uphold the school's right and responsibility to be concerned with your behavior off-campus and on weekends. As we said a little earlier, you have now matured into a larger place in society. You are no longer free to escape your responsibilities because of the time of the day, day of the week or geography. Again, let's stay realistic. No one at school wants to form an off-campus vigilante group. We assure you this will not happen. However, no one will close his eyes because you don't want him to see.

At the beginning of this letter we said we think you know the rules and that the problem is one of attitude. Now, before closing this letter we want to speak of one additional problem we think pertains to attitude. The problem we refer to is the dirty, cluttered condition of the Berkeley campus.

Some of your teachers have suggested the cause of this problem is what you are "allowed to get away with at home." Others suggest you are spoiled and expect your teachers to be your servants. Let us clarify things for you and your teachers. We do expect a clean, cared for campus. We do not accept finger pointing as a solution to this problem. We expect you, our children, to care for your things and to clean up after yourselves. The teachers are not your servants. However, we think teachers teach not only by words but more powerfully by example. We believe the teachers influence extends well beyond the classroom door to the mall, mound, lunchroom and whole Berkeley campus.

(over)

Have we made a terrible mistake? If, because we can provide you with more material things than a lot of young people your age, have we then unwittingly taught that you have no responsibility for these things?

It is a long letter. No, it makes no attempt to set new rules or to change values. The letter, we hope, clarifies what we are thinking, feeling and now talking to one another about as parents, parents of Berkeley students. As suggested at the start; ponder it. Then talk to us.

Love,

Mom and Dad

PARENT SURVEY - UPPER DIVISION

Thoughts about _____

In preparation for _____

We have students in the following classes: 9 10 11 12
(Circle)

1. We commend the following at Berkeley:

2. I wish we had known more about the following. (Please explain)

   a. Developmental stages expected in a teenager in Grade(s) Circled above

   b. Academics

   c. Sports

   d. Discipline

e. Fine Arts

f. Social Events

g. Student Relationships

h. Counselling

i. Extracurricular

j. Other

3. More information on the following items would have made the year smoother for our family.